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Excerpts from Reagan campaign aides on Carter material

Washington Bureau of The Sun

Following are excerpts from letters sent in response to queries on how the 1980 Reagan campaign obtained Carter campaign briefing material.

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From James A. Baker III:

"In 1980, sometime after the Reagan-Anderson debate and before the Reagan-Carter debate, I do remember briefly seeing a large looseleaf bound book ... that was thought to have been given to the Reagan camp by someone with the Carter campaign. But I do not believe this was strategic material. It is my best recollection that I was given the book by William Casey, with the suggestion that it might be of use to the Debate

Briefing Team. I should note, however, that I have recently checked this recollection with him, and while he has not contested my recollection, he has no such recollection of his own. It is my further recollection that after briefly thumbing through the binder, I passed it on to the Debate Briefing Team, headed by David Gergen and Frank Hodsoll."

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From William J. Casey:

"I have no recollection that I ever received, heard of or learned in any other way of a set of papers which laid out the Carter debate plan or the points which President Carter had planned to make as described in Mr. Barrett's account.

"Upon receiving your letter I checked with my secretary during

the campaign, two of my special assistants and five of the deputy campaign directors and none of them have any knowledge that the campaign ever received or had any paper or information resembling that described by Mr. Barrett."

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From David R. Gergen:

"I do not recall ever receiving or seeing a 'Carter debate book' or any other notebook from the Carter campaign

"It is possible that I did see some pages of 'Carter material' for a brief period, but I do not recall it.

"I do recall hearing that some material from the Carter campaign was present in the Reagan campaign. To the best of my recollection, the material was not described to me

as important or dramatic"

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From David A. Stockman:

"My recollection of the 'document' referred to in Mr. Barrett's book begins with a package of material that was delivered to my office ... from the Reagan campaign committee ... I believe this was October 23, 1980.

"... The documents dealt entirely with policy issues ... and contained standard arguments in support of Carter Administration initiatives and policies.

"Due to the advocacy character of these issue briefs it was apparent to me at the time that they had in some way come from the Carter campaign."